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LETTER DATED 3 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TAJIKISTAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of an article by H.E. Mr. Yakhyo Azimov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, which was distributed by the Tajik Information Agency (TIA) "Khovar" on 28 November 1998 (see annex).

I should be very grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rashid ALIMOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Tajikistan
to the United Nations

98-38275 (E) 031298 031298

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Yakhyo Azimov, Prime Minister of Tajikistan

National unity: A guarantee of progress for Tajikistan

The making of an independent and sovereign Tajikistan nation and State that began in 1991 faced our country with a range of extremely difficult economic and political issues that could be resolved only by forming a new kind of society that was consolidated by a single national idea.

The Republic's very first steps on the road to independence and sovereignty were like wading through a morass of left-over or new economic, political, social, cultural and moral problems, while actually it was being led by the rising new political elite along a track set by narrow-gauge interests and the ambitious and power-hungry. The subsequent civil war not only exacerbated the ideological and political contradictions of Tajik society to the limit, but also revealed its regional disparities more clearly and so put the very existence of a sovereign Tajikistan in jeopardy. And it was only the wisdom of our nation and its will to unity that managed to stop the senseless, bloody strife that posed the threat of national suicide if it continued.

The painstaking, complex work that the Government of Tajikistan is carrying out to build the State, a task that would embody the collective spirit of the nation, which the right to a dignified and happy life for every citizen of Tajikistan has pride of place regardless of creed, race, nationality or language, has been met with understanding and support not only within the country but also far beyond its borders.

That rallying the people on a platform of a common national idea is a positive thing is something our friends understand and which the overt and covert enemies of the young Tajik State cannot fail to understand. Actually, from the very moment Tajikistan gained its independence that very idea came under furious attack from certain political circles, including foreign ones, and a number of mercenary mass media outlets, which were none too fussy about the means they used. And their goal? Ideological sabotage aimed at undermining confidence between the representatives of the various nationalities, but even more so at splitting Tajiks themselves by regional characteristics. In this outpouring, using the national ethnic, geographic, cultural and traditional characteristics that had developed over the whole history of Tajikistan has become the pet propaganda approach.

It is no secret that the recrudescence of separatist attitudes and a realization on the everyday level by a part of Tajikistan's population of their own "special" territorial and local communality cannot, unfortunately, be fully overcome at present, either from the point of view of the historical legacy or through the objective progress of the Tajik people's contemporary history. Regional self-identification is now a fundamental obstacle to the development of a common national self-awareness among Tajiks as a single people, and it is a

constant rod and staff for manoeuvres in the political games organized by various groupings that are on the sidelines of the country's internal political life, but which doggedly strive to gain at any price the power they long for.

We citizens of Tajikistan have on many occasions witnessed the various types of ideological and military provocations which our foes periodically organize; the characteristic feature of these has always been and still is a specific tendency towards splitting the people and setting them against each other on a regional basis, since the ancient and historic military stratagem is "divide and rule". In Tajikistan's seven-year history as a sovereign State, various and, typically, basically foreign mass media have put out hundreds of publications on the theme of so-called "personal government by southerners", "the north's political dodge", "the hostile confrontation between the east and the west", "self-determination for Badakhshan", and dozens of variations on similar themes, differing from each other only in their degree of hatred for the young Republic. Open lies, bias, juggling with the facts and invidious comparisons make up the basic content of these articles penned by home-grown political pundits and experts on Tajikistan, most of whom have, so to speak, never clapped eyes on Tajikistan itself nor on its people.

The events of November this year in Leninabad region are a striking illustration of an attempt to make the usual kind of split in Tajik society and to pit the north of Tajikistan against the south. A crew of insurgents organized an anti-government action in support of the northerners and miscalculated, as they had failed to take into account the understanding that has actually come to fruition in Tajik society that the society must be consolidated on the basis of the peaceful initiatives being carried out by the President of the Republic, Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov.

Having lost the military and political fiasco, the remnants of the insurgents and their leaders have even now not lost hope of hoodwinking the people of Tajikistan and the world community with leaflets, appeals to authoritative international organizations and verbiage made to order in the foreign press containing claptrap about a so-called genocide by southerners against the rest of the Republic's population. The version, which is popular even without their help, to the effect that only representatives from Kulyab have been put in key posts does not hold up to any scrutiny whatever. All it takes is to list the most important State offices held, for example, by representatives of Leninabad region in Tajikistan's organs of State and it becomes patently obvious that this kind of accusation is completely groundless: there are the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Procurator-General, the Deputy President of the Majlis-i Olii, the Secretary of the Security Council, State Adviser to the President on Economic Affairs, the State Adviser to the President on Parliamentary and Legal Affairs, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Communications, the Minister for Land Improvement and Water Management, the Minister for Environmental Protection, the Minister of Social Security and the leaders of a number of government committees. That being the case, there are another three facts that should be taken into account: (1) The representatives from the south and the north apart, a significant number of high offices are held by people from the other regions of the Republic; (2) The process of integrating representatives of the Tajik opposition into the power structures is continuing; and (3) The fundamental principle of the State's

personnel policy is not the regional representation factor in the power structures, but a leader's practical and professional qualities.

Today the whole world is witness to the good will of the people of Tajikistan whose work, thought and aspirations aim towards peace and national unity in their native land and towards building the true sovereignty which would serve as a guarantor that their national interests are realized; these interests aim for a dignified life imbued with self-esteem and a feeling of pride in a single, indivisible country in which there is no place nor shall there ever be for international and intranational conflicts, ethnic superiority or ethnic levelling.

Dushanbe, 28 November 1998